

# MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

*- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -*

**Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad**

Sunday, June 5, 2011



**Greenhouse Horticultural Production** – Iraqi farmers have traditionally targeted summer months for open field production of fruits and vegetables. The variability of wholesale prices for horticultural products during summer months undermines any opportunity to generate profits. USDA PRT Agricultural Advisors’ efforts to raise farmer incomes during the winter months, has increased the presence of greenhouse vegetable production technology. Since 2008, with QRF, CERP and ICERP funds, these advisors invested \$7,716,564, which has funded the installation of 1,778 green houses with drip irrigation (75-80% water savings from flood irrigation) in an area covering approximately 300 acres. USDA helped train 14,408 farmers.



**PRT Baghdad Supports NGO**– PRT Baghdad supported the Country Women Development Organization by providing a learning laboratory for children from kindergarten to the 6th grade in the Mada’in qadha. The project provides a small greenhouse with drip irrigation, a small chicken coop for hens or chicks, a small feed lot for sheep, and a computer lab for students. The agricultural education portion will be installed by locals and will supplement an existing school curriculum. The students will experience hands-on activities directly related to agriculture as a result of this project.



**Floating Fish Farm In The Tigris** – With the support of a \$25,000 QRF grant, a floating fishery was built by locally contracted fabricators. GMAAD, the grant recipient located the fish farm along the Tigris River. The fish farm does not require any pumps, water quality testing equipment, permanent holding facilities, or aeration systems. The project will utilize existing pure water supplies from the Tigris River to grow fish on a large scale.

**Beehives to GMAAD** –GMAAD, a thriving agricultural cooperative with 1,000 members, received beehives to help pollinate their fields and orchards as well as produce honey for sale at the market. The project will also provide honey collection equipment to fully support the value chain.

**Personnel Update** - There are currently 18 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad or embedded with U.S. military units. FAS Baghdad bids a fond farewell to departing Ag Advisors, Omar Shwani, Mary Kerstetter and George Melton. We express our gratitude for their outstanding service to U.S. Mission in Iraq and to the people of Iraq.

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